

November 30 , 2016

Senator Al Franken
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Franken,

Thank you for your letter dated November 2, 2016. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the issues raised by the National Bureau of Economic Research study on ridesharing and discrimination, and we look forward to working together with you and other interested Members of Congress to tackle these critical issues together.

Uber is committed to providing efficient and reliable transportation for everyone, everywhere. As part of that mission, we strive to ensure that all riders, especially those living in areas previously underserved by transportation options, have a convenient, safe, reliable, and affordable way to get around. We welcome the opportunity afforded by the study for us to understand what more we can do to improve the rider experience for all of our customers and guard against the impact of bias on our riders and drivers.

Minority communities have long endured discrimination and unequal access when it comes to transportation, whether “hailing while black,” being refused a ride due to final destinations, or experiencing a lack of affordable neighborhood transit options. Examples of real change have sprung up across the United States after the introduction of ridesharing services like Uber. For example:

- 50% of Uber trips in Chicago begin or end in underserved neighborhoods;
- Uber trips in D.C. to and from Wards 7 and 8 increased by 700% between Nov. 2014-Nov. 2015; and another 150% between Nov 2015-Nov 2016
- Nearly a third of Uber trips in New York City are to, from, or within the outer boroughs (compared to 10% with taxi);
- And a study in Los Angeles found, on average, UberX rides in lower-income neighborhoods are less than half the price of taxis and arrive in less than half the time.

In order to answer your questions, we wanted to first clarify what information is transmitted to the driver when a rider requests an Uber. Before accepting the request, a driver sees only the rider's current location, star rating, type of service selected (e.g. UberX), and whether dynamic pricing is in effect. After accepting the request, the driver then sees the rider's first name. A rider's full name is never shown to a driver. Uber doesn't require our riders to assign a photo to their account, and even if they choose to do so, the driver never sees it.

We designed the app to share a rider's first name with the driver (and vice-versa) because we believe it creates a better interaction for everyone involved. Beyond creating a more friendly experience, sharing first names is very important to ensure a smooth and safe pick-up process. For example, drivers may need to call riders to clarify a rider's exact pick-up location, and we encourage riders and drivers to ask for each other's names to ensure they are entering the correct vehicle at pick-up. For these reasons, we have real concern that removing names altogether (and replacing them with numeric codes, as the study suggests) would lead to more confusion and potentially less safe outcomes. It is unlikely that riders would

consistently use codes, and riders might enter the wrong vehicle or even ride with someone illicitly posing as a ridesharing driver.

We regularly monitor a number of metrics around driver performance, including cancellations, in order to ensure high-quality service for all riders. There are many valid reasons why a driver would need to cancel a trip after accepting the ride—for example, a personal issue arises and they cannot continue driving, or a rider fails to arrive at the requested pickup location—but we strongly encourage drivers and riders to minimize cancellations. In most US cities, the average cancellation rate is around 5%, and we take action when a driver's cancellation rate rises above the city average. Drivers receive warnings and their account may be temporarily disabled or, in certain cases, deactivated for excessive cancellations. Additionally, our nondiscrimination policy, which is shared with our drivers and is publicly available online, states that drivers who engage in any discrimination based on “a person's race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, sex, marital status, gender identity, age or any other characteristic protected under relevant federal, state or local law” will lose access to the network.

We also wanted to clarify that prior to the study's publication, Uber had already instituted product changes that address some of the issues raised by the researchers. In most US cities, we have begun showing riders the estimated full price of the trip before they request a ride, providing riders with clarity about what to expect in terms of cost.

While no single technology can eliminate bias in society, we always strive toward a better experience for all of our customers. In light of that goal, and the survey's findings, we are committed to examining any root issues and possible product mitigations. This includes:

- Meeting directly with the researchers who conducted the study to discuss their findings and suggestions in greater depth. We have had initial discussions with the researchers, and look forward to continuing the conversation.
- Launching experiments to test new ways to guard against the effects of discrimination on our platform. As we further develop and learn from these experiments, we look forward to staying in touch with you about what we learn.
- Reviewing our policies around how and when we notify drivers of our non-discrimination policy.

I am proud of the work Uber has done and will continue to do to improve transportation equity. I am personally committed to exploring these issues, as they strike at the heart of our mission to bring reliable transportation to all. I am confident the vast majority of drivers using Uber also share these values.

We will be in touch with you and your staff as we have more to share.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TKal', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Travis Kalanick
CEO, Uber Technologies, Inc